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ABSTRACT

Drawing from experiences at Delaware Technical and Community College (DTCC), these papers discuss the institution's entrepreneurial approach to two aspects of college administration: developing relationships with business and industry, and management planning. Entrepreneurship is defined as the ability to find and evaluate opportunities, locate needed resources, and take action. First, John R. Kotula traces DTCC's efforts to involve faculty and staff in providing flexible, customized services to businesses on a contract basis. A description is provided of DTCC's Industrial Training Division, an entirely self-sustaining program, which in 1987 executed over 136 contracts and received more than $2.8 million in revenues. Examples of the Industrial Training Division's programs are cited, including an employee retraining program for Research and Development Laboratory Technicians, a three-year training program to facilitate a company's transition to robot- and microprocessor-based production, and short-term training programs in banking operations. Next, Henry J. an entrepreneurial spirit into a college. Requirements for achieving a kinetic style of management are identified, including extraordinary efforts at communication; goal setting; accountability; an open, fair, responsive, and encouraging management style; and a disciplined process to encourage meaningful participation in decision making. Finally, a description is provided of DTCC's formal planning process and its effects on line managers' sense of responsibility. (ALB) .pa

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MANAGING THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE WITH AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

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June 13, 1989

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Managing the Community College With an Entrepreneurial Spirit

by

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President
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for

League for Innovation in the Community College
Leadership 2000 Conference
San Francisco, California
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In Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, Alice asks directions from the cat:

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where," said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

"So long as I get SOMEWHERE," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

I'm sure that as executives of major institutions you spend a great deal of time and energy planning the directions of your organizations. As Jim pointed out, it pays to have a disciplined process in place and involve as many people as you can.

I would like to propose to you today, if you are not already doing so, that in fulfilling this responsibility of mission setting, you inject a healthy dose of entrepreneurship. By entrepreneurship, I mean the ability to find and evaluate opportunities, put together the resources, and take the action necessary to secure full advantage of these opportunities.

I would like to give you some concrete examples of what I mean by all this. Most of this relates to my own Institution, Delaware Technical & Community College.

Each year, Delaware Tech publishes a placement report concerning the employment of our graduates. In that report there are listed 400+ companies that hire our graduates. They range from hugh multinational chemical companies to hospitals; from engineering concerns to law offices. They hire our engineering graduates, secretarial, health, business, and data processing graduates. This, of course, is what we are all about--educating people so they can become employed and enjoy a full life.

The fact that we interact with so many businesses is no accident. We actively pursue our relationships with business and industry. Of course, we have advisory committees drawn from the business world, and they are very helpful. However, this is only half the equation. While businesses are involv
ed with us, through our advisory committees, we pursue, diligently, active involvement of our faculty and staff with business.

In the beginning, we were looking for ways to involve our faculty. Upon closer examination, or perhaps from a different perspective, we realized that we had an excellent by-product from

pursuing our primary mission. Actually, I like to think of this as an "added value" approach. We have what I think is a very competent and dedicated staff. We also found there was a large number of persons in our area that possessed specific talents and skills. Why not package what we do best -- training -- for business and industry and offer to meet their needs for a reasonable price.

How did we do this? First, we needed a radically different structure--one that was not encumbered with traditional schedules and procedures. A structure which would serve the marketplace well. Secondly, we needed to create the appropriate cultural environment, different from the academic setting that has served our regular clients and credit programs so well over the years. In this regard we wanted a totally client-oriented organization. Finally, we needed to have an organization that could be "flexible." I cannot emphasize this enough. It did not seem to us that our approach would work well if we simply offered courses and waited to see if there were any takers. We needed to be flexible enough to design solutions for problems that were brought to us. Customized approaches for each customer. In fact, as it turned out, with a lot of hard work, we have begun to establish a reputation for our flexibility in addressing our clients' needs. We definitely benefit from being known as an organization that listens to business and then responds in a way that includes them in the design of the solutions.

In order to do this we created a division within the College that we call the Industrial Training Division. This division would have to pay its own way, generate its own business, and respond to changing needs in its own marketplace.

Why undertake all of this? Certainly these contracts provide a handsome margin of resources for the support of the College's regular programs. As all of you know, that can be a real godsend if you must depend upon local tax revenues or state appropriations to run your college; and these arrangements allow for some variety in the faculty's routines as well as providing them with an opportunity to earn a supplement. But more important, it helps to keep the College on the cutting edge of what our employers need and want in skilled personnel. We are now incorporating laser technology, composite material courses, robotics, and biogenetics into our courses where it is appropriate. It is through these relationships that we establish credibility with employers. If they can see that we are capable of serving some of their training needs, they can feel confident that we are producing the kind of graduate they need to fill their personnel needs.

Why an entrepreneurial approach? Educational institutions,

like government agencies, or for that matter, some businesses, can become bureaucratic. Unresponsiveness, a lack of energy, a lack of urgency; and critical judgment are some conditions that come to mind in relation to bureaucracies. If we are to succeed with our primary mission of preparing individuals for today's and tomorrow's workplace, it is absolutely critical that we stay out in front, on the cutting edge of what that workplace needs. Nothing does this quite as efficiently as having to earn your way.

Our Industrial Training Division is entirely self-sustaining. In fiscal year 1987, we executed over 136 contracts and received 2.8+ million dollars. Our faculty and staff, as well as adjunct faculty, participated in these projects. They brought home to the College a wealth of ideas, knowledge, and up-to-date experience from these efforts. Our faculty wrote training manuals -- rethinking their methods as they went -- created new courses and approaches for evolving high tech processes that companies are just starting to use. They found out what it is like to deal with language barriers and underdeveloped areas through our foreign contracts. They experienced having to deliver a product on time and achieve results in a real world situation.

Here are some real examples of what I mean.

The need to retrain the existing workforce for new products is a serious issue facing United States companies. When the Instrument Bioscience Division of the Du Pont Company wished to transfer its assembly operations from Delaware to Virginia, it became apparent that approximately 100 people would become displaced because of this move. The Du Pont Company, in conjunction with Delaware Tech, developed a unique, six-month, full-time training program designed to retrain personnel into Research and Development Laboratory Technicians. During a six-month period, the 65 employees reported to the College for eight (8) hours each day. There they attended a highly compacted biotechnical training program. The success of this program was astounding. Each of the employees completed the program and is actively involved in the research and development of vaccines and new testing methods.

This generated approximately $155,000 in revenue for the College and it saved the company an immeasurable amount of effort in training needs, but most importantly, it retained 65 highly paid, skilled positions for the local economy.

As part of a retooling effort by the General Motors/Wilmington plant, the company was planning to acquire over 350 robots and approximately 2,000 microprocessors. Also, the introduction of new technologies necessitated the job reclassifications at the plant. The

cost of these new technological changes was estimated at $360 million, of which $12 million would be allocated for training. The College was a full partner with General Motors/Wilmington during the transition period and received approximately one-half of the training budget over a period of three years. The money was used to train existing as well as new personnel on technical and production methods. We also provided a safety net by training small numbers of employees who had been designated for separation from the company. At the height of this activity, the College employed 55 full-time staff and approximately 60 part-time trainers in addressing the needs of General Motors.

Training programs need not always be long in duration or have large budgets to be successful. One of the college's most successful efforts in assisting with the economic development of our State has been the enrollment of JTPA and other low-income clients into short-term (6-8 weeks) training programs in banking operations and check processing. These programs have been instrumental in providing stable, well-paying jobs for this segment of the population that needs it most.

These are the kinds of experiences I want in a faculty. Our educational staples are not static. We do not have a great number of courses which delve in-depth into the philosophies of the ancient Greeks or ponder the impact of the Roman empire on western civilization. Not that these are not worthy subjects; it is that we are a technical College, preparing people to go to work.

Being entrepreneurial demands always looking for new niches and developing new products. The Japanese and Western Europeans are constantly accused of flooding the United States' markets with cheap products. I wish to note that the United States has been instrumental in providing means to transfer technology to developing nations so they can absorb products that our country has to sell.

The most urgent need for foreign aid in the developing nations is in the areas of education and specialized technical education. In answering a request from the United States Agency for International Development in 1983, our College was selected to assist the first private sector sponsored Technical Educational Institution in Lima, Peru. Of the 1.2 million dollars that the U.S. Government donated to the institution, $250,000 was earmarked for technical assistance. Our College was totally responsible for the market research, and subsequent development, of the continuing education and contract division of the school. The College developed 21 technical courses and acquired the necessary equipment. We also dispatched faculty

members to Lima to work with their Peruvian counterparts in implementing these programs.

Based on the success of that program, we are in the early stages of discussion in repeating the program in El Salvador. To ease the concerns for criticism, not only did these programs NOT remove any resources of the College from its primary mission, but provided revenue, invaluable staff development, and travel opportunities for the staff.

To be entrepreneurial means sometimes taking risks. We need to allow promising, rising professionals in our college the opportunity to exploit new market niches by providing the initial resources and freedom to operate outside the bureaucratic domain. This does not mean the entrepreneurial spirit should be left unchecked to its own devices. Simply, entrepreneurs tend to be gifted individuals who often lack resources, organizational skills, or the necessary contracts to delivery the product to the marketplace.

It often amazes me that the degree of success in any given activity is directly proportionate to the degree of risk and responsibility assigned to the program managers.

We also attempt to create this kind of atmosphere in our regular programs. Responsibility for enrollment and placement are part of the criteria by which all of our program directors are judged.

I should mention at this point a couple of caveats. Although this topic is about businesslike approaches in education, we have not forgotten the traditional concerns of the Community College. We are concerned about student success assessment issues, quality of instruction, enrollment of minority or disadvantaged students, faculty quality, and other issues that are continuously on the Community College agenda. A businesslike approach, however, is not totally inappropriate or inadequate to help keep a College out in front in terms of addressing these issues.

If I may, I would like to suggest several things to incorporate in your perspective on managing a community college if you don't already to this:

First, under the heading of Market research:

1. identify your clientele, and
2. identify their needs.

In terms of strategic planning:

1. examine and specify your objectives in terms of your clients needs, and
2. generate the support for these objectives to ensure their success.

Implementation:

1. put appropriate responsibility at the program manager level for success, and
2. measure objectives rigorously.

Attitude:

1. allow managers to take risks and give them the credit they deserve, and
2. remember that everyone who comes through the door is a customer.

When I began, I quoted Lewis Carroll in which Alice wants to get somewhere but she is not quite sure where. The cat astutely points out that she will get SOMEWHERE if only she keeps walking. I know you will agree with me that we don't want to get just ANYWHERE. I recommend to you entrepreneurship as one tactical method of achieving the missions you have selected for the institution.

Managing the Community College With an Entrepreneurial Spirit

Planning: The Necessary Evil

by

Henry J. Decker

for

League for Innovation in the Community College

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Before I begin with some comments on planning, let me suggest a few definitions. These are from "The Concept of Corporate Strategy" by Kenneth R. Andrews.

> **Planning**--a continuous process that shapes the nature of an organization . . . and achieves its purposes,
>
> **Strategy**--a plan or a very specific plan of action directed at a specific result within a specified period of time; and
>
> **Strategic Management**--the making of current decisions in the context of long-range plans.

These definitions suggest to me that a prerequisite for managing is to have a set of objectives for the organization; it further suggests that in order to have an effective organization:

- People must share purpose and direction,
- They must have the ability to perceive new realities, and
- They must have adeptness at implementing action plans.

The question always becomes, How to do this? How to instill a caring attitude, an independent, yet goal-oriented, can-do spirit into an organization. I wish I could tell you that there was a quick and easy solution for this. I can't. In my experience, with several large organizations, I have found that it takes a considerable period of time and effort, often several years, to illicit responsive action.

In our institution we have tried several approaches to management planning. Originally a "bottom-up" approach was taken. Predictably, the

response from everyone was, "How do we know what to do until management tells us." We then tried "top-down" planning and all that came back was exactly what we asked for and nothing more. This was not very encouraging. After all, we knew the major missions of the institution, but the top is never very good at knowing all the best ways to achieve them, especially in large complex organizations. This approach did not seem to call forth many ideas, and if there is no premium on promoting self-risk, one can hardly expect participants to endanger their own survival.

How to create a sense of excitement--of good things coming-- of participation, of each person helping to create their own future, is a difficult and painstaking task. To achieve this "Kinetic" style of management, as some refer to it, requires extraordinary efforts at communication. This should include goal setting, accountability, and a management style within a disciplined process.

Communication must draw participants into the process and place responsibility with them. This is how people share purpose, perceive new realities, and have opportunities to implement their action plans. Perhaps the four most important words in the English language are, **"What do you think?"** As Winston Churchill once said, "Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

Goal setting is required, but it should be a joint process. All parties should come to agreement on what the appropriate measures are but also ensure that they are specific and quantifiable. A simple measure such as headcount or FTE leaves many aspects of programs unexamined. Objectives do not need to be all encompassing. They must be understood and agreed upon as

the yardstick to gauge performance. The subtler, more nebulous qualitative issues can be addressed elsewhere within the context of an overall process or through special analysis.

Insist upon accountability. Review results with managers and discuss why they were or were not achieved. Take appropriate action if performance is consistently subpar. Adjust objectives if they turn out to be unrealistic.

Finally, I strongly believe that successful implementation of a creative management mind set is dependent upon two things-the **style** of the manager and the presence of a **disciplined process.**

Management style is always a popular topic. It seems that no matter how many books are written on the subject or how many courses incorporate this, it takes actual on-the-job training and constant practice to achieve any degree of proficiency. Most of us recognize principles of good management style: openness, fairness, responsiveness, encouragement, calmness, interest, etc. It appears, however, that we have trouble practicing these all of the time.

A disciplined **process** is easier to quantify. A systematic process should encourage meaningful participation, generate specific objectives, allow for deviation, promote feedback, and include all levels of management. Implementation of such a process is infinitely more difficult than defining it.

It seems to me the reason for this is that each organization has its own unique cultural identity. This cultural makeup determines what an organization can undertake or absorb at any given time. One of the most fascinating examples of this, albeit a rather simple one, occurs at Walt Disney World and involves all of the "customers" even though there are thousands of different ones each day. I call it the "Mickey Mouse environmental control program." If you

have been to one of the Disney attractions you will notice that all day long there are polite employees with little brooms and sweeper pans who sweep up the trash that is thrown down. It is swept up almost before it hits the ground. Intrigued by this, I have on several occasions, observed this process of the sweepers and the effect they have on the patrons. After a short while in the park, almost everyone, including children, start looking for waste receptacles in which to place their trash. In other words, they are "conditioned" and "adopt" the expectation that trash is not thrown on the ground. At the end of day the grounds are almost as clean as in the beginning and I'm sure the clean-up at night is simpler and less expensive than would otherwise be the case. Unfortunately, this behavior modification does not last long--as soon as my children return home they begin throwing things on the floor again.

The point I'm trying to make is that the challenge is to increase the entire organization's commitment to communication, cooperation, and collaboration.

Behavior modification can take place in an organization if the right stimuli, that is, processes are used. In my institution, as in most, we have a formal planning process in place. It contains major agreed upon objectives which are measured throughout the year, including each line manager's objectives or activities. Each summer, a report on the progress of these activities is compiled and submitted to the President and Board of Trustees. Each manager and his subordinates make a presentation to the Board. This presentation is completely unscripted by any staff office. Each manager is free to address what they see as his/her accomplishments and obstacles. Usually, he/she must also defend what the Board feels may be a lack of progress. These are not always exchanges

coated with sugar and honey. In the past such issues as minority enrollment and inadequate operating levels for some programs have become pointed, heated, and blunt debates.

In addition, we produce a quarterly report for our managers, measuring their progress in various areas and in various ways. The reports are for their use and no comment is made as to the adequacy of any results shown. Actually no comment is needed. Slowly everyone is coming to realize the expectations involved. In other words, the management cultural environment is slowly changing and as it does, self-imposed responsibility becomes more and more commonplace. This doesn't mean that we are always successful--in fact some problems have proven to be difficult to completely resolve; but we have a lot of successes also, and people who have made them happen have been recognized. By and large we are batting far above .500.

The essentials for us are:

- To decide where we're going,
- To make customer service all important,
- Encourage innovation,
- Demand quality, and
- Measure results.

I would like to turn to one other matter before I finish--don't worry, as Henry VIII said to his third wife, "I won't keep you long."

We also undertake a good deal of internal self-examination at our institution. This is usually called Institutional Research and carries that name in our College. The results of these analyses are made available Collegewide and various operating groups, such as Deans and Directors groups are

encouraged to participate in the formulation and execution of the studies. This kind of activity is invaluable to addressing complicated topics such as student assessment, retention, profile analysis, academic offerings, etc. These efforts are supported by extensive on-line data bases containing student demographics and academic information. Without these computer systems, the analyses would be infinitely more difficult.

As a personal observation, the nice thing about Community Colleges is that they have achieved more dramatic results than many other segments of our educational system. It would be nice to think that this is a result of strategic management. In any case, it certainly has something to do with the fact that Community Colleges have had to "adapt and deliver" in the marketplace.

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